

## Revolutions and Public Policy

*It is not necessary to hope in order to undertake, and  
it is not necessary to succeed in order to persevere.*

WILLIAM I, PRINCE OF ORANGE

Life was hard for people of the Netherlands during the 16th century. Spain had crushed the country with religious suppression and military might. Misery spawned resistance. William I, Prince of Orange, led his country in revolt with words that seemed to state a modest goal. Prince William, however, succeeded in building the union that brought freedom to his people. He doubtless knew but did not mention one essential element in victory: passion. Passion provides the motivation and energy to wage a long campaign and the resilience to rebound from setbacks.

Starting a successful revolution and developing sound public policies have similarities. They both require leaders, strategists, and followers. They need passion and tenacity. They must have matériel such as supplies of weapons or ideas and words. They progress best when cadres of effective people are involved.

Over the last quarter century, the Sun Valley Forum has assembled just such cadres of effective people to study emerging health policy issues. Topics have changed with time and need. In August, 1997, the Forum

met again in spectacular Idaho to focus on genetics. The Human Genome Project is only one of the forces compelling examination of the implications of advances in this field. Considerations must be made regarding many issues in genetics: ethics, counseling, responsible public education, training of health care professionals, privacy, job restrictions, screening, research; and conflicts between science, religion, and public health. At the same session, discussion of HIV/AIDS, vaccines, and xenotransplantation also led to formal observations and recommendations.

With support from the Sun Valley Forum, we are pleased to present in this supplement a brief description of the Forum's work, an overview of the 1997 conference, and its summary statements. It is fortunate for all of us that attendees at the Forum (see page 9 for list) were willing to take time away from other responsibilities to respond to these challenges. By making the report more widely available, we hope that a better informed health care corps, passionate on behalf of patients and the public, will persevere to success in developing exemplary public policies relating to genetics.

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